

# Anicca

## Impermanence

The most valuable thing in one's life is wisdom (or intelligence - පඤ්ඤා), which is the understanding of the reality of our life. According to Buddhism, our success and real happiness completely depend on how far we have practiced and developed wisdom. Therefore, Buddhism always encourages us to develop wisdom to the maximum level possible during our life time. Wisdom is the most important thing that leads us to see the world's reality of overcoming ignorance. That is why Buddhism explains that wisdom is like the dawn of light to the dark world. There is no light like wisdom (නන්වී පඤ්ඤා සමා ආභා). Wisdom is the priceless gem of men (පඤ්ඤා නරානං රතනං). Wisdom gains purification (පඤ්ඤාය පරිපුජ්ඣති). Wisdom in Buddhism means understanding impermanence (*anicca*) which is the main reality of all physical and mental states. Understanding impermanence leads to comprehend delusion and to cease delusion which is the mean cause of all defilements and sufferings.

Beings in the world experience the world through his six senses like eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Through these six internal senses or spheres beings experience external objects like forms, sounds, smell, tastes, touch and thoughts. Beings have no other experiences except these six senses and six objects. Being's entire life is these twelve things. Understanding these twelve phenomena leads to understand one's entire life. Understanding these twelve things helps to understand suffering and the cessation of suffering.

When a sense arises with ignorance like eye, other conditions which are related to it form, eye consciousness, eye touch etc. arise at the moment. These all things arise together and cease together. When a sense arises with ignorance, other senses don't work at the moment. A sense arises at once. Previous mental conditions influence the present sense and conditions, but present sense and conditions arise at the moment. There aren't any ready-made things in this sensual world. Everything arises when conditions are together, and they cease at the moment when conditions separate. If someone can investigate this reality, his mind doesn't depend on any thing or anyone. It means he has overcome suffering. However, if someone is ignorant in this reality, his mind is fixed in external things and persons. Then he is not away from suffering. When external things and persons change, he suffers.

If we have any kind of experience through our senses, it means five aggregates arise at the moment. Five aggregates are forms (රූප), feelings (වේදනා), perception (සංකල්ප), mental formations (සංඛාර) and mind (විඤ්ඤාණ). These five aggregates arise together at the moment when the conditions are together, and they cease when the conditions separate instantly. These five things appear behind any kind of experiences in our life, but they are invisible. We can see only experiences. We have to see these five aggregates by intelligence. The nature of these five aggregates is arising and ceasing at the moment remaining nothing. Not being occurred (in the

past) comes to an occurrence. The most valuable and interesting explanation in Buddhism is impermanence. It says in Buddhism; **Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not come to (the future) occurrence.** (අනුත්ථා සම්භූතං භුත්වා න භවිස්සති). This is the nature of **impermanence** that Buddhism illuminates. This is not the Buddha's creation; it is one of the Buddha's discoveries. Whether a Buddha appeared or not in the world, this reality is there forever. However, because of our ignorance we think that our past experience continues. This, unknowing of impermanence, is the cause of suffering. When we think about some previous experience, we go to the past and we live with that experience. We suffer or enjoy in this way. We mostly live in the past or future in delusion. Because of this wrong view, we lose the fortune of living at the present moment. Also, we miss our real happiness. To overcome this misconception, Buddhism always advises us to practice mindfulness and wisdom.

If we have an ability to understand all our experiences as the result of arising five aggregates, that understanding causes to decrease ignorance. It means our desire and anger also cease gradually as much as we have this understanding. Then our suffering also reduces little by little. Our real happiness increases day by day if we are on this path. When we see the results, we hurry to go on this way practicing virtue, tranquility and wisdom.

As the result of understanding impermanence as the Buddha explained, we can realize the nature which are the three characteristics or signs (*Tilakkhana*) in all physical and mental our experiences. They are;

1. Impermanence (*Anicca* - අනිච්ච)
2. Unsatisfactoriness (*Dukkha* - දුක්ඛ)
3. Egolessness or selflessness, non-self (*Anatta* - අනත්ත)

Understanding of these three things is interrelated. If we have real understanding of impermanence, we are able to understand unsatisfactoriness. If we have clear knowledge of unsatisfactoriness through the understanding of impermanence, we are ready to emphasize the non-self. Non-self or egolessness means we have nothing in our control. That is why we are subject to sickness, old age and death. If we have something in our control in our life, we would have overcome sickness, old age and death.

If we can reflect on these three phenomena about everything, we have nothing to attach or get angry. *Anicca* means every experience arises and ceases every moment. *Dukkha* means unsatisfactoriness in our experience because of impermanence. *Anatta* means there is nothing which is in our control. If we have this investigation perfectly, nothing can disturb our peace of mind because our mind is very pure, calm and strong with understanding of impermanence. We are like a lotus which rises from mud in the pond. Even though we live in the society with the people who have defilements, we have no lust in our mind. Day by day we go forward on the path of purification.

Here we see that every moment the world or our experience arises and ceases with the conditions. When conditions are together, we have experience. When conditions cease, experience ceases. When we see, hear, smell, taste, touch or think, the internal world arises. When experience ends, our internal world ceases. The real world that we have in our experience is instant. The world is always fresh. Because of our delusion, we think the world is old. That is our fault. If we can reflect the real world as fresh and renew, our mind is also fresh and pure without any defilement. Buddhism always guides us to gain this understanding. We may try to practice this teaching, achieve the results and get rid of suffering in this life itself.

On this way we have to develop our confidence in The Buddha's enlightenment, knowledge, reflection according to knowledge, and meditation. Day by day we have to go forward fast taking the maximum use of time.

සබ්බෙ සංඛාරා අනිච්චාති යද පඤ්ඤාය පස්සති,  
අථ නිබ්බන්දති දුක්ඛෙ ඒස මග්ගෝ විසුද්ධියා.

*“Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā”ti yadā paññāya passati;  
Atha nibbindati dukkhe esa maggo visuddhiyā.*

“All conditioned things are impermanent”—when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification.

සබ්බෙ සංඛාරා දුක්ඛාති යද පඤ්ඤාය පස්සති,  
අථ නිබ්බන්දති දුක්ඛෙ ඒස මග්ගෝ විසුද්ධියා.

*“Sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā”ti yadā paññāya passati;  
Atha nibbindati dukkhe esa maggo visuddhiyā.*

“All conditioned things are unsatisfactory (suffering)”—when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification.

සබ්බෙ ධම්මා අනත්තාති යද පඤ්ඤාය පස්සති,  
අථ නිබ්බන්දති දුක්ඛෙ ඒස මග්ගෝ විසුද්ධියා. (ධම්මපද, මග්ගවග්ග)

*“Sabbe dhammā anattā”ti yadā paññāya passati;  
Atha nibbindati dukkha esa maggo visuddhiyā. (Dhammapada-Maggavagga)*

“All things are not-self”—when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification.

Every experience we receive through our senses is impermanent. Also, it is unsatisfactoriness. Because we can't keep it as permanent, we worry when it changes. If we have full awareness about our experience as it is, we can overcome suffering. We can face any kind of good or bad experience without big attachment or anger. It means we are free from suffering. The Buddha's effort was pointing out this path to the world. If we practice this path and get rid of suffering, that is the real way to respect the Buddha. That is the only thing that the Buddha expected from us.

With the understanding of purification, to make this experience permanent, we have to follow a path that is the noble eightfold path. It is,

1.	Right Understanding	( <i>Sammā ditthi</i> )	සම්මා දිට්ඨි
2.	Right Thoughts	( <i>Sammā samkappa</i> )	සම්මා සංකප්ප
3.	Right Speech	( <i>Sammā vācā</i> )	සම්මා වාචා
4.	Right Action	( <i>Sammā kammantha</i> )	සම්මා කම්මන්ත
5.	Right Livelihood	( <i>Sammā ājiva</i> )	සම්මා ආජීව
6.	Right Effort	( <i>Sammā vāyāma</i> )	සම්මා වායාම
7.	Right Mindfulness	( <i>Sammā sati</i> )	සම්මා සති
8.	Right Concentration	( <i>Sammā samādhi</i> )	සම්මා සමාධි

If we can conduct our all activities according to this path, we go forward towards the purification day by day. Also, we can see the results reaching real happiness overcoming suffering.

**Oh! All conditions are impermanent,  
their nature is to arise and cease  
having arisen, they cease;  
their stilling is true bliss.”**



**May the Triple Gem Bless you!**

තෙරුවන් සරණයි!

**May all beings be well, happy and peaceful!**

(වෙත්වා! සවිසත හැමකල් නිදුකී)

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